

A Simple Table of Data Charts

Chart Type	Typical Applications	Notes
Line Charts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Find and compare trends, - Display a change in direction, - Compare two data series over time - Show correlation - Show rise & fall of values over time 	In a time series, the category spacing on the x-axis should be proportional. Only use line charts when the x-axis variable is continuous (time, distance, etc.).
Area Charts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Display data change over time - Compare two or more quantities 	Based on line charts, but shows magnitude better.
Column Graphs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Show frequency distribution (histogram) - Show comparison of data sets - Show relationship between data series 	Multiple columns can be used to present data for several variables. Avoid stacked bar charts.
Bar Charts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good for ranking data sets - Show comparison of data sets 	To highlight high values, sort in descending order, to emphasize low values, sort in ascending order
Pie Charts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compare data sets as percentages of a whole 	Popular, but has limitations. Use no more than five "slices." Label the slices themselves instead of using a legend. If the values are close, distinctions will be difficult to decipher. Our eyes are great at comparing line lengths, but can't judge angles very well.